



# CohiCITY

Fellows:

**Nawa Jahshan–Batshon** | Head of Organizational Consultant Team and Interface with Arab society Collective Impact– The Partnership for a breakthrough in Arab Employment

**Kher Albaz** | Co– Executive Director of the Arab–Jewish Center for Equality, Empowerment and Cooperation – Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development. AJEEC– NISPED is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating a shared society and strengthening active citizenship through education, and economic and community development

**Ran Juhl** | Head of the community development department at the Israel Association of Community Centers (IACC). The IACC is one of Israel's largest social organizations.

**Dr. Shimon Nevo Vaknin** | Head of BINA Secular Yeshiva in Be'er Sheva. This secular Yeshiva offers Jewish learning and direct action as steps to strengthening Jewish identity, mutual responsibility, and social cohesion

The "tribes" within Israeli society are gradually shuttering themselves into their localized community identities, which distinguish them from everyone else. The absence of interaction between the communities is becoming more and more acute. These processes increase the alienation between the tribes and therefore pose a clear, imminent threat to Israel's democratic society. To engineer a significant change in terms of community exclusion, one must take action, at least at first, at the local level, rather than through far-reaching nationwide programs. Thus, it will be possible to find the winning formula, where we can optimize the impact.

Since local government is a product of local politics and the power structures and web of interests in each town and village, it has difficulty operating alone and making a difference in the area of community cohesion. Furthermore, civil society is, in fact, a set of organizations, each operating unto itself under the pressure of limited resources. Their sporadic initiatives fall short of influencing and altering social cohesion at the regional level, not to mention the national level.

It is therefore necessary to proceed according to the following two general principles:

- (A) Operate within a clearly demarcated local sphere (for example one city or one cluster of akin villages);
- (B) Arrive as a network of cooperating organizations, working together within the chosen territory, offering accessibility to a common language and agenda of connectivity between the organizations and the establishment, that builds a proactive, motivating and coordinating organization with knowledge of mature initiatives, connections, resources, and knowledge at the national level. This network must operate methodically, and it must do its research and evaluation processes.

## Implementation steps

- A. Reaching internal agreement among the founding partners
- B. Publishing a public appeal for the city to be chosen
- C. Evaluating the candidates and selection of a city
- D. Learning the current state of the city: strengths, weaknesses and needs
- E. Forming a steering committee/forum – selecting a project manager
- F. Mapping the organizations operating in the territory
- G. Mapping the organizations and resources at the disposal of the network
- H. Building an action plan
- I. Setting targets to be accomplished according to a timetable and setting evaluation targets and concrete measures of the success for each target and plan that will be put into operation
  - The step above are to be implemented within three to five months
- J. Execution
- K. Summary evaluation and lessons learned according to a predefined timetable

## The Change Theory

If the Israel Association of Community Centers (IACC), AJEEC, Collective Impact, and BINA join forces, it is possible to approach a city and, if we get the city's consent, to form a coalition with other organizations active there.

And if we will operate at such a volume, then other organizations we will have been able to bring on board will be able to join and bring new initiatives with them.

And if these organizations all work together, we will in fact be able to drive a powerful network of organizations rich in means and power to create a new reality.

And if the network operates in a manner that will build up the local forces, we will be able, within a short time, to effect the change we have been seeking and move out of that city toward our next target, while the city we leave behind, will continue to manage itself in terms of social cohesion.